



# **John Reich Journal**

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# JRCS

JOHN REICH COLLECTORS SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 135 Harrison, OH 45030

The purpose of the John Reich Collectors Society (JRCS) is to encourage the study of numismatics, particularly United States gold and silver coins minted before the introduction of the Seated Liberty design, and to provide technical and educational information concerning such coins.

Annual dues .....\$20.00  
Life Membership .....\$500.00

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or articles for publication, please write to the Editor:

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The John Reich Journal is the official publication of the Society and is distributed to all members in good standing. Members are encouraged to submit any articles encouraging the study of numismatics and / or relating to early United States gold and silver coins to the editors. Especially needed are articles containing new information about die marriages, die states of published die marriages, attribution methods, collections, collectors, etc.

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**Cover Photos:** 1822 0105 Double Struck Obverse. Major errors on our Federal Coinage are both rare and interesting. Much can be learned about the minting process from the study of errors. You can learn more about Bust Half errors by reviewing Ken Hill's article *Double Struck Bust Halves* from Whole Number 36, December 1998 of the JRJ.

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# John Reich Journal

Official publication of the  
John Reich Collectors Society

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## Editor's Comments

Happy Holidays to all! I hope everyone is enjoying the season and now, the latest issue of the journal. It is my pleasure to; again, bring the latest information on bust coinages to the membership. My thanks go out to the authors for their submissions which you will soon read. I would also like to encourage everyone to take the time to send something for publication in the New Year. The next issue will be out in the spring, and promises to be another interesting addition to our libraries.

I have been made aware of two new books that will be available to collectors of the half dollars very soon. The second edition of Edgar Souder's Bust Half Fever was released at the Michigan State coin show Thanksgiving weekend. Don Parsley has announced the impending publication of the fourth edition of the Overton tome on the halves. They should both be available soon at numismatic booksellers and coin shops.

One of the most exciting things to happen to JRCS in a long while was finalized at the meeting during the ANA in San Francisco. Bill Luebke agreed to host an email newsletter on the bust coinages. If you would like to participate in the weekly publication please contact Bill at JRNews@nyc.rr.com. We will be making Bill's publication the official cyberspace newsgroup of the JRCS at the next national meeting. Join now for more fun!

Speaking of FUN. There will be a meeting for the JRCS at the upcoming FUN convention in Orlando. If you are planning on attending the show please make time to visit us and interact with other collectors of the bust coinages. The actual meeting time and place will be published in the FUN program.

One of the most enjoyable things about being editor of your journal is being able to preview the articles submitted for publication. I really enjoy everyone sent to me for inclusion. At the end of each year I also have the pleasure of counting the votes for the **Jules Reiver Literary Award** as voted by the membership. This year we had a runaway winner for the award. Ted McAuley's two part submission "The Enigmatic "E" and "L" Countermarked Quarters of 1815 and 1825: A New Hypothesis Regarding Their Origin, Purpose and Historical Context" Parts I and II was the winner. An award plaque will be produced and sent to Ted commemorating his achievement. Congratulations!

Those members wishing to submit articles for publication can do so by sending them directly to our printer. Please send them to prepress@zoomtown.com. In the subject line put 'JRCS Article'. Please also inform me of your submission. If you are sending images, they should be 300 dpi grayscale tiff files. The Journal designer can also use high resolution jpeg files that have not been compressed. If you need technical assistance, contact him directly. Please consider sending something soon.

A final reminder to the membership; please send in your **DIME CENSUSES** for publication in the next issue of the journal. Your participation is essential to produce a meaningful census for the enjoyment of the society.

Now, sit back and enjoy your exploration into the wonderful world of bust coinages

# Plaudits, Pans and Perplexing Points

I enjoyed the articles by Ted MccAuley on “The Enigmatic E and L Countermarked Quarters of 1815 and 1825.” I thought they were well researched and well written. I have problems, however, with the author’s conclusion.

A vote is a one-time, transitory event. There is no need and no value in creating an expensive token to tally the vote when other methods are more convenient and less expensive. I might accept another explanation of their use within the Economite community. I don’t believe the countermarked quarters are voting tokens.

The article implies that distribution of tokens by date and by letter represents the number of veteran and novice members supporting each side. This would require that the outcome of the vote was known before the tokens were produced. Again, this casts doubt on the purpose of producing a known quantity of tokens to tally an unknown result.

In 2005 the 1815 host coins are 190 years old. If McAuley is correct that the countermarks were produced around 1832, their meaning had been forgotten by 1881 when they first appeared in the numismatic market. Thus the tokens represent the permanent record of a long-forgotten purpose.

Tokens are produced for extended and repeated use. While many political tokens promote a candidate or cause, I can’t recall any used to tally a vote. While McAuley’s hypothesis conveniently matches the facts, I believe it fails the test of logic. In my opinion the countermarked quarters remain an enigma.

Pete Smith



*Counterstamped Bust quarters*





# **Bolender's 184th Mail Auction Sale Who consigned the Early Silver Dollar Lots?**

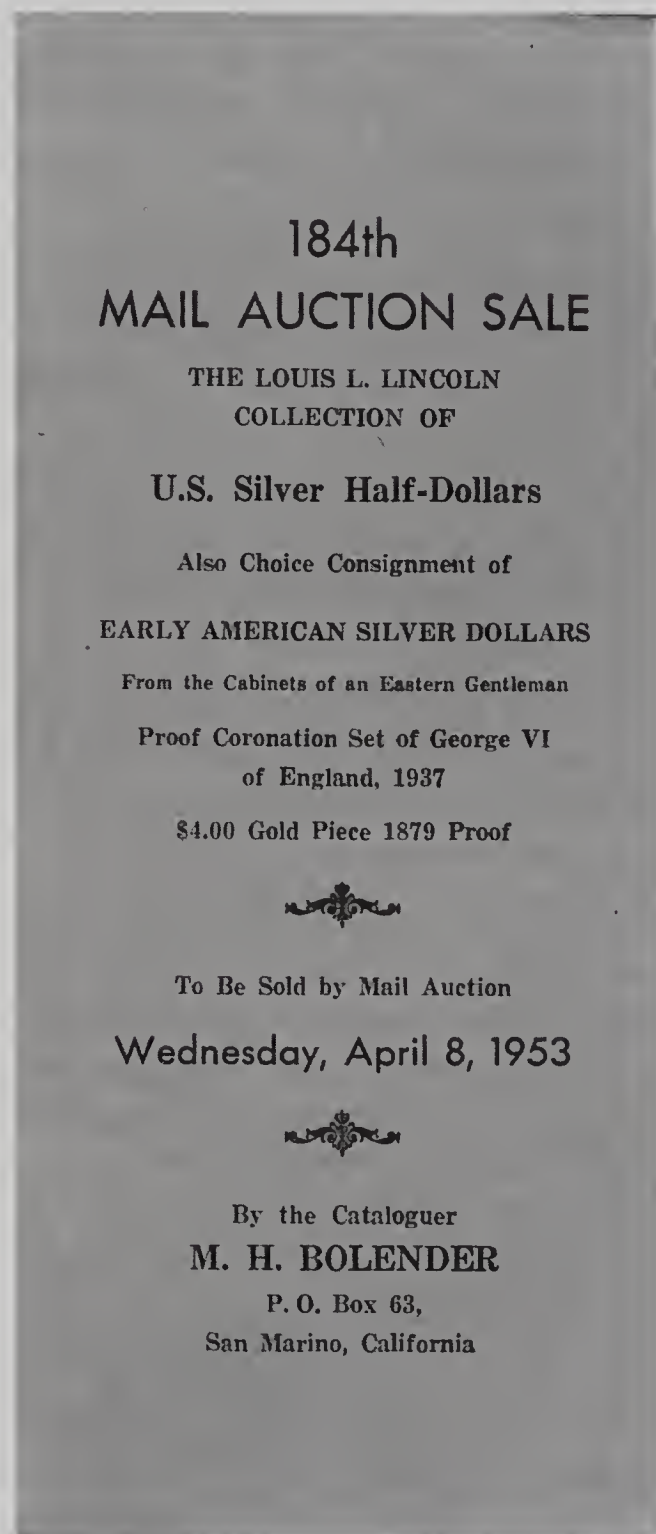
**W. David Perkins, NLG**

*United States Numismatic Literature* by John W. Adams lists 197 auction sales by Milferd H. Bolender, beginning some time prior to 1925. Adams noted that sale numbers 1-10 had not been seen by him.

Adams stated, "Sales after number 45 are more obtainable with but one exception." The exception (Adams, footnote 4, page 97) was Bolender's "Sale 184." On page 112, Adams notes for Sale 184, "The first California sale, which may explain the scarcity of this catalogue." Adams further noted that this sale contained "Early \$1 varieties."

The date of the sale was April 8, 1953. Of interest, the catalog is a "small format" catalog, measuring just shy of nine inches high by four inches wide. Bolender and his wife had recently located to San Marino, California. Bolender notes in the introduction to his 184th Mail Auction Sale, "While I am semi-retired, I will continue to handle rare and unusual numismatic items, and choice coins and paper money."

*[San Marino is also the home town of a fellow JRCS member and early dollar specialist. Early dollar collectors may recognize this collector as his collection was billed and sold as "The San Marino Collection" in Ira & Larry Goldberg Coins September 23 & 24, 2002 The Pre-Long Beach Auction sale. Ironically, as stated in the introduction to this sale, "Little did he know that Milferd Bolender also lived in San Marino at the same time...]*



*Bolender's April 8, 1953 184th Mail Auction Sale. Early silver dollars were consigned by W. G. "Farish" Baldenhofer. This very rare "small format" catalog measures slightly less than 9 inches high by 4 inches wide.*

I acquired a copy of this very rare catalog from a Remy Bourne auction sale in the 1990s. Of particular interest to me were lots 273-302, early dollars from 1795-1803. The introduction to these lots read:

### UNITED STATES EARLY SILVER DOLLARS

These choice specimens are duplicates from the largest and most nearly complete collection of this series, the property of a prominent eastern gentleman.

April 1953 was a year or so after two important sales of early silver dollars by die variety. The first was the February 1952 sale of Bolender's own reference collection of early dollars. The second was the 1952 A.N.A. Convention Sale. Bolender's book *The United States Early Silver Dollars From 1794 To 1803* was first published in 1950, spawning a new generation of early dollar collectors. Early dollar collections by die variety were being formed during the 1960s and 1970s by numerous collectors, including K. P. Austin, Frank Stirling, W. G. "Farish" Baldenhofer, W. Earl Spies, Charles Ruby



*Obverse of 1795 B-10 Dollar, ex. Baldenhofer. This was lot 3099 in the 1952 A.N.A. Convention Sale. Pedigree per the author's research is O. K. Rumbel – Baldenhofer – Bolender – Ostheimer – Possible Intermediate Owner(s) – Mid-American's September 1985 Sale, Lot 514 – Blevins – Miller – Perkins.*

and Emanuel Taylor. Many of these collectors were buyers in these two 1952 sales. For over 15 years I've been working to figure out the buyer's names for the early dollar lots in these two sales. I've had pretty good luck with the February 1952 Bolender sale and some luck with the '52 ANA Sale. In 2003 I learned from George Kolbe that the American Numismatic Society (ANS) had a copy of the '52 ANA Sale with buyer's names (for most lots). I contacted ANS Librarian Frank Campbell and asked to get copies of the early dollar lots from this sale with the buyer's names noted. Sure enough, Stirling, Baldenhofer, Spies and Austin were key buyer's of the early dollars in the '52 ANA Sale.



*Reverse of the extremely rare 1795 B-10 Dollar.*



# 184th MAIL AUCTION SALE

THE LOUIS L. LINCOLN  
COLLECTION OF

**U.S. Silver Half-Dollars**

Also Choice Consignment of

**EARLY AMERICAN SILVER DOLLARS**

From the Cabinets of an Eastern Gentleman

Proof Coronation Set of George VI  
of England, 1937

\$4.00 Gold Piece 1879 Proof



To Be Sold by Mail Auction

**Wednesday, April 8, 1953**



By the Cataloguer

**M. H. BOLENDER**

P. O. Box 63,  
San Marino, California

I have always been curious as to who was the "prominent eastern gentleman" who consigned the early dollar lots to Bolender's 184th Sale? My best "educated guess" was always Alfred J. Ostheimer. In September 2005 I was reviewing a file on Bolender's 184th Sale. As I read through the lots *a light clicked on*. Many of the lots were pedigreed to the '52 ANA Sale and a few to Bolender's collection. I quickly pulled out my listing of buyer's names for the '52 ANA Sale and bingo; W. G. Baldenhofer most assuredly appears to have been the consignor!

Baldenhofer went on to form one of the great collections of early silver dollars by die variety. This was eventually sold to Bolender who sold the majority of it to Mr. and Mrs. Ostheimer, a story for another day....

*[Via the buyer's names for the '52 ANA Sale, I was able to trace the pedigree on an extremely rare and choice 1795 B-10 silver dollar in my collection to Baldenhofer and the '52 ANA Sale (ex. O. K. Rumbel collection). In 2004 I acquired extensive correspondence and notes of the Ostheimers from Mrs. Ostheimer, including details on the purchase of the Baldenhofer collection by Bolender.]*

*Introduction to Bolender's 184th Mail Auction Sale. The "prominent eastern gentleman" who consigned the early dollar in this sale turns out to be W. G. Baldenhofer. Note the first lot, a 1795 B-1 Dollar was lot 1225 from the '52 ANA Sale. Per the ANS '52 ANA Sale catalog with buyer's names, this lot was purchased by Baldenhofer. A comparison with other lots confirms Baldenhofer was the consignor referenced by Bolender.*





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# Bust Dollar Notes

**Bill Luebke**

## Previously Unknown Specimen of 1798 B-18, BB-103 Auctioned

A previously unknown specimen of the extremely rare (perhaps five known) 1798 B-18, BB-103 dollar appeared as Lot 1889 in the Coin Galleries (Stack's) Mail Bid Sale that closed Wednesday, July 20, 2005. It can be viewed at <http://www.stacks.com>. The coin was properly attributed and was graded "About Good." Despite the lowly grade, the coin was plated (bad luck for me). I examined it in person and would grade it Good 4. Coin Galleries did not hype the coin as a rare variety at all, so I hoped I could buy it for a fair price. Despite putting in a substantial bid, I did not. It sold for \$10,350, an impressive price for a "dog" (actually it is likely Condition Census # 3).

On the Monday following the sale I asked one of the Stack's cataloguers about "a coin in the Mail Bid Sale." He asked which lot and I gave him the number. He called it up on his computer and immediately wheeled around and nearly shouted "What was up with that coin? We couldn't believe what it sold for!" I informed him and he said "If we had known that, we would have put it in a regular auction."

The cataloguer said the coin was consigned unattributed as part of a general collection of U.S. coins by a collector. Stack's attributed it but clearly did not realize its significance. So there is now one VERY happy consignor out there!

Now, the question bugging Early Dollar Nuts is: "Who the heck did buy it?"

## 1798 B-17, BB-101 Added to 1996 Redbook

The rare (R-5+) 1798 B-17 dollar is now listed in *A Guide Book of United States Coins* as a distinct "Redbook" variety, the "Pointed 9, 5 Vertical Lines" variety. I can quibble with that designation as I believe the fact that B-17 is also the only 1798 dollar with Pointed 9 and Large Letters reverse is far more important and distinctive than the lines in the shield stripes, but I am delighted it is finally recognized as a distinct variety. The Redbook has long listed minor die cutting (and lapping) variances like "Wide Date" and "12 Arrows" while ignoring true design differences.

However, the Redbook prices the B-17 at virtually the same levels as common varieties. With only 30-40 specimens believed to exist, it is at least 3-4 times more rare than the 1794 dollar or the 1797 B-2 10x7 Stars, Small Letters variety. Does this mean the value of 1798 B-17 will zoom in the future? Maybe, but it is so rare that dealers will not be able to buy enough of them and promote them to sky-high levels as they did with the 1795 Silver Plugs and 1799 8x5 Stars, which are actually quite common despite the hype. But if you can locate a 1798 B-17 at anywhere remotely near Redbook "value," scoop it up.

Next up for the Redbook: 1799 B-15, BB-152? It is the only 1799 dollar with a line star pattern on the reverse (in fact, a reuse of a die used to strike two 1798 varieties).

## Is the 1798 B-31, BB-115 Dollar Really R-5?

The 1798 B-31 was once considered a great rarity, unknown to Bolender. I find the 1798 B-31 dollar appears far too often to be listed as Rarity 5 as reported by W. David Perkins in the Bust Dollar Survey. In fact, I think R-4 could be generous. Two or three other early dollar collectors agree with me. Dave and I have a friendly wager: If I can locate at least 75 different specimens, he'll buy me lunch. With little effort I have traced over 40 specimens. They appear frequently in auctions, in dealer stocks, on web sites and on eBay. Many (most?) are offered unattributed. Just the other day I received a Stack's auction catalogue that lists only 47 bust dollars but two are 1798 B-31, a very unlikely circumstance if B-31 is really R-5. Help feed me and report your B-31 sightings to me at [wluebke@nyc.rr.com](mailto:wluebke@nyc.rr.com).

An interesting fact concerning the 1798 B-31 dollars is that they usually come nice. I have seen few low-grade specimens. VF 30 to AU 50 is the norm. They are sometimes a bit undergraded by the services due to the usual weak striking of the reverse stars due to die bulging, but a few are well struck.

## 1795 B-9, BB-13 Dollars and 1794 Sheldon 57 Large Cents

What do the 1795 B-9 dollars and 1794 S-57 large cents have in common? Both are usually easily recognizable by their color alone.

A number of fellow dollar guys have noticed that the 1795 B-9 dollar always seems to have a distinctive battleship gray color with "matte" surfaces seldom, if ever, seen on other 1795 varieties. Even after being cleaned they seem to retone to that same color.

The 1794 S-57 large cents also tend to have a distinctive color. They usually come light in color, in shades of pale olive, tan or even a bit brassy looking, unlike other 1794 varieties. One could describe their usual color as unattractive.

So what's the correlation? I think all the 1795 B-9 dollars were coined on the same day from a single bullion deposit. No other varieties were coined from that deposit. The trace elements in, or substandard refining or alloying of, that bullion caused the distinctive "look." Likewise, I suspect all 1794 S-57 large cents were coined on the same day from the same batch of funky copper.

## 1799 B-10 BB-163 Die State I Exists

In January 2002, I was surfing eBay and stumbled across a 1799 dollar PCGS (green label) VF 20. The photo was murky so I didn't even try to attribute it. But the "Buy-it-Now" price was well under Graysheet Bid so I jumped on it. A few days later it arrived and proved to be the common-as-mud B-10 variety. But something was strange. It had no die cracks. None. Nada. Zilch. Isn't B-10 always loaded with cracks?

Q. David Bowers wrote in his *Encyclopedia of United States Silver Dollars* for B-10: "Die State I: Early state; perfect dies. No obverse or reverse cracks. May not exist."

The hunt was on. I have since located three other Die State I specimens: Heritage 05/07/05, PCGS AU 58, Lot 7581 @ \$11,500 (no mention of die state, but verified by Jim McGuigan,



who examined it at my request); Heritage 07/28/05, PCGS VF 35, Lot 6549 @ \$3320 (catalogued as Die State I); and another specimen on eBay several months ago (not seen in person but the photo was large and very clear).

So does this make Die State I a rare and valuable commodity? Probably not. B-10 is far too common and there are likely more unattributed Die State I specimens floating around out there. And at a time when truly rare varieties are selling for pittance compared to common ones, Die State I is likely worth no premium.

### The 1800 "AMERICA I" Dollars

There has long been speculation regarding the cause of the "AMERICA I" dollars of 1800, B-11, BB-191 and B-19, BB-192, both struck from the same reverse die. The usual theories include "die break" and "stray mark."

The former is highly unlikely as I am unaware of a perfect die coin. The extra "I" is amazingly consistent in length and shape on all coins seen. Die breaks usually evolve over time, getting longer as more coins are struck from the die.

The stray mark theory holds a little more water, but how was it caused? A piece of metal on the die? If so, it would have had to occur when the first coin was struck, as no coins are known from this reverse die without the stray mark. A slip of the graving tool? Also not likely as the mark is relatively long and deep.

My theory is that the extra "I" was intentionally graved into the die. We know that major die elements like the eagle were hubbed into the die, but smaller items like letters were hand punched. I believe the die cutter was trying to engrave the stem of the olive branch and became disoriented. Note that he was working on a "mirror image" of the design and toward the end of a long work week, in poor light and under the influence of laudanum the mistake is easy to make.

\* \* \* \* \*

Are you a Bust Dollar Nut? Or hope to be? I would appreciate your comments. Email me at [wluebke@nyc.rr.com](mailto:wluebke@nyc.rr.com).



1800 B20 Bust Dollar



# Use And Misuse Of The Term Rarity In Numismatics

**Michael S. Fey, Ph.D.**

This is to start a dialog among fellow numismatists in a broad range of numismatic disciplines about the longstanding use and misuse of the "R" (Rarity Factor), a commonly used short hand way of expressing rarity by catalogers in auction catalogs, by sellers in internet offerings, and by coin dealers in their inventories.

Perhaps the easiest way to start, is to give a hypothetical example of a possible listing of a coin in a major auction catalog:

## **Quality 1799 Dollar, XF45 PCGS**

Lot # 1234. **1799 XF45 NGC.** B-19, BB-155, R.4. A scarce variety....

If the reader does little more than scan the date, variety and the R factor, he might be led into believing that this is simply a "scarce" silver dollar. But, what is the true rarity of this coin as we currently know it?

The hard core collector of early silver dollars would likely be up-to-date having read many books on the subject. He might know that this coin was listed as an R5 in Bolender's original book<sup>1</sup>. It was listed as R5 in Reiver's revised rarity ratings of Bolender in 1988, R6 in 1987 by Doug Winter, and R4 in a 1990 JRCS survey. It was listed as R4 in the 1994 JRCS survey, R4/5 by Q. David Bowers book in 1993<sup>2</sup>, and R5 by W. David Perkins in 1997<sup>3</sup>. Jules Reiver assigned R5 to this variety in his book on United States Silver Dollars in 1999<sup>4</sup> opting to use the rarity ratings developed by W. David Perkins in the Spring, 1998. The collector-investor at this point is totally turned off because "who wants to buy an R4 silver dollar when an R5 or higher would likely be a much better investment?"

## **The Sheldon Rarity Scale<sup>5 & 2</sup>**

Rarity scale. R1 most common; R8 least common. The often used Sheldon scale is:

- R8 = 1, 2 or 3 known, "Unique or Nearly Unique"
- R7 = 4-12 known, "Extremely Rare"
- R6 = 13-30 known, "Very Rare"
- R5 = 31-75 known, "Rare"
- R4 = Population estimated at 76-200 known, "Very Scarce"
- R3 = 201-500 known, "Scarce"
- R2 = 501-1250 known, "Not so Common"
- R1 = over 1251 known, "Common"



So, what does this R4 silver dollar described in the auction really mean to the hard core collector or the collector-investor? Well, that depends on what you normally collect.

If I am a Morgan dollar collector seeking a type coin, it means that this coin is very scarce with “Tens of Thousands” estimated to exist according to the definition of the rarity scale by Leroy Van Allen<sup>6</sup>. The Van Allen scale is clearly different than the Sheldon Scale, which adds more confusion to the rarity rating.

If for example, I were a Liberty Seated half dollar collector, an R4 would mean there are 116 to 160 pieces estimated to be known<sup>7</sup>. The Wiley-Bugert scale is also slightly different than the Sheldon scale, but more closely approximates it.

As a large cent collector, using the Sheldon scale above, it might mean there are 76-200 specimens known, or if I now follow a Modified Sheldon Rarity Scale for Large cents developed by Del Bland<sup>2</sup>, it would indicate R4 as 118-158 of currently known specimens<sup>7</sup>.

As a hard core Morgan dollar collector wishing to pick up a nice early silver dollar as a type coin, perhaps this would be a fairly good specimen to buy, but it's way too common according to the definition of rarity that I currently use for Morgan dollars.

So, is this coin really an R4? Naturally, coins will come onto the market over time causing reductions in rarity ratings. Since Bolender defined this variety Bolender-19 (B-19), and Bowers defined it as Bowers-Borckardt -155 (BB-155) at R5, than I would guess a knowledgeable cataloger with the latest updated information would have researched this in today's market to be R4+ or R5, with at least 76 specimens now known to exist. Again, this should not mean **estimated** to exist as is sometimes the case, but more accurately **known** to exist. Thus, the **overall rarity of this variety** might be an R4, but does that really mean that this is an R4 coin?

This particular coin was certified as a PCGS XF45. There are likely many of this same variety out there at a lower grade, thus the overall rarity of **this particular coin**, which after all is what is being offered, may actually be higher than R4. My JRCS Early Survey Data from September, 2000<sup>8</sup> indicated that the coin is listed as R5 with 14 specimens in the hands of JRCS collectors who participated in the survey. The average grade was 34 with a maximum grade of AU50.

If I check the NGC, PCGS and ANACS population reports, which I know may be inflated due to resubmissions, I might find that this particular coin, as an example, is the 13th finest certified, or substantiated as known. Thus, while the overall rarity of this particular variety might be R4, **this particular coin might be an R6 in grade** according to the Sheldon Scale above.

So, is this coin an R4 or an R6?

For the purpose of simplicity, I won't even get into the differences in grading between the grading services, the quality differences between certified “good” coins and “problem” coins of the same grade or the fact that someone may report a raw specimen as a grade substantially higher than a grading service might grade it.

I happen to notice that this particular variety comes in various **die states** according to Bowers book. Die State IV, the latest die state with a really nice obverse and reverse die break. This is often referred to as a terminal die state, and was cited by Bowers as a “rare” die state. Bowers claims that most dollars of this variety are usually seen as Die State III. So now, if I consider the **die state** of this particular specimen, it might be among the 5 or 6th finest known, **an R7 coin**, and a “Condition Census” coin too!

As a consignor of this coin to the auction, I would feel that the coin may not have been portrayed accurately according to its true rarity. As a collector-investor, I’ve already passed on the coin as being too common. As a very knowledgeable collector, I may have “ripped” a very rare R7 coin at a relatively inexpensive R4 price.

Going back to the original listing of this coin, I think the rarity of this coin might better be communicated as an **“R7 by die state, R6 by grade and R4+ or R5 by overall variety”**. Thus, what started as a “scarce” R4 variety in actuality may be an “extremely rare” borderline “Condition Census” coin of that variety. The above hypothetical example was used to illustrate how an **R7 coin** could be misrepresented by an R4 rarity rating.

It has been the general practice in our hobby of listing the rarity (R) of coins by **variety rarity only**. But, what are we really communicating about the coin that is being offered? I believe that solely listing the rarity of the overall variety is a “misuse” of the “R” term and not representative of the true rarity of the coin being offered. With more and more collectors seeking rare die varieties, high grade specimens, and even rare die states, isn’t it time that catalogers, dealers and knowledgeable sellers of coins start communicating a more accurate picture of the **actual rarity** of the coin being offered?

### **References**

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# From the Internet

## Bill Luebke

At the JRCS general meeting in San Francisco last July I proposed starting an email newsletter dedicated to U.S. Federal silver and gold coinage of the 1794-1839 period. After lively debate, it was decided that it would not be an official organ of JRCS, but a sign-up list was passed around nonetheless. The vast majority of members present signed up. I was also able to obtain more subscribers at the ANA convention and through word of mouth. The first issue of the JR Newsletter was published August 14, 2005. Anyone interested in subscribing should contact JRNews@nyc.rr.com. There is no charge and all are welcome. At October 9, 2005 there were 146 subscribers.

Some highlights from the first seven issues:

**W. David Perkins** reported an article in Numismatic News that stated that Breen's theory that the E and L counterstamped 1815 quarters represented "English" and "Latin" "is almost certainly correct." **Brad Karoleff**, **Rich Hartzog** and **Henry Hilgard** responded in language that could actually be published. **Don Stoebner** reported an 1824 O-101 half with double inverted edge lettering, an 1827 O-139 with doubled edge lettering and an 1830 LM-5 half dime late die state with cud. **Gary Rosner** reported a strong die spur on his 1821 B-1 quarter from the bottom of the bust left of the 8, which also appears on the Browning plate. **Jim Matthews** and **Bill Luebke** both wrote about their experiences at the San Francisco ANA convention and both reported a previously unknown specimen of the extremely rare (perhaps five known) 1798 B-18 dollar sold by Coin Galleries. Graded "About Good," the coin fetched \$10,350, buyer unknown. **Brad Karoleff** responded with humorous tales of ANA conventions past and present. **W. David Perkins** contributed an article on the extremely rare 1796 B-3 dollar, listing the known specimens and provenances. **Julian Leidman** delivered a poignant memory of Jules Reiver. **Robert Kauffman, MD** requested information on early minting techniques and **Brad Karoleff** responded with sources of that information.

**Bill Bugert** offered to mention JR News in the E-Gobrecht newsletter. Anyone interested in Liberty Seated Coinage can receive the E-Gobrecht by contacting Bill at wb8cpy@arrl.net. **Dave Rutherford**, of [www.busthalfprices.com](http://www.busthalfprices.com), reported that he added a link to JR News on his web site. **Michael Savinelli** reported that he added a thread to the PCGS message board re JR News. Thank you, Bill, Dave and Michael. **Steve Liu** commented on the current market for rare bust dollar varieties. **W. David Perkins** reported that the July 2004 issue of the *John Reich Journal* won an award from the Numismatic Literary Guild and that *Coin World* published a great write-up of JR News and of the JRCS general meeting at ANA in the August 22, 2005 issue. **Steve Crain** requested all JRCS members to submit listings of their holdings for the Half Dime Survey. Bob Stark wrote that all JRCS members should receive the *JR Newsletter*.

**Nathan Markowitz** contributed a thoughtful treatise on the meaning of "rarity." **Michael S. Fey** responded with his comments. **Brad Karoleff** provided a review of the book *Fractional Money* by Neil Carothers. **Mark Borchardt** and **Denis Loring** reported that the Jules Reiver sale will be held in January 2006, not November 2005 as originally announced. Jules' coins can be viewed on the Heritage website at [www.hnai.com](http://www.hnai.com). **W. David Perkins** contributed a piece on 1820 half dollars.

**Kay Freeman**, who is fact-checking a biography of John Reich, requested information about John Reich's reported indentured servitude. **Brad Karoleff** provided a definitive response, including the location of the recorded indenture. **W. David Perkins** reported the discovery 12th known (to him – there may only be 11; one of the 12 may be a duplicate sighting of one of the others) specimen of the extremely rare 1795 B-10 dollar. This coin was acquired by Frank Stirling in 1981. **W. David Perkins** also wrote a piece on the Samuel Mills Damon collection recently discovered in Hawaii, noting that famed early dollar collector Alfred Ostheimer had also formed an extensive collection of Hawaiiana.

**Glenn Peterson** requested information for the Browning quarter update regarding unreported die states and remarriages. **W. David Perkins** contributed a whimsical article on the 1952 ANA sale of the dollar collection of O. K. Rumbel and interesting "hits" he got on the internet while researching "O. K. Rumbel," including "rocket mail." **Bill Luebke** offered his explanation of the cause of the 1800 "Americai" dollars.

**Sheridan Downey** reported that a newly discovered specimen of the extremely rare 1817/4 O-102 half dollar turned up at the Long Beach show in September 2005. To quote Sheridan: *Tim Hargis, an ANACS grader, came by my table to "consult." Henry Hilgard, Stu Levine, Jon Kern and I looked at the coin. We concluded it was genuine. It is a late O.102a, with bisecting obverse die break, standard weakness in the back curls, detail of sharp VF, maybe XF, but pits and bumps on the surfaces. Weighs 13.05 grams and has an edge that matches an 1817/3 that I had on hand. Tim could not say who the submitter was. He did reveal that the coin was "recovered from the ground," accounting for the problems. I'd place it no. 7 in the Condition Census which now goes to 8 coins. The scudzy, Gd./repaired Overton coin is No.8.* Sheridan also provided excellent photographs of this great find. **W. David Perkins** made several reports in various issues of the JR Newsletter of interesting bust dollars recently auctioned or to be auctioned, including extensive pedigree research.

**Bob Stark** reported that the Wilmington Coin Club honored Jules Reiver at a recent meeting where the Reiver family was in attendance. The Club presented a handsomely engraved plaque honoring Jules (and Iona, Mrs. Reiver, implicitly) for their unbelievable contributions to numismatics for well over one-half century. "**Anonymous**" posed an interesting question regarding ethics and coin dealing.

In addition, there were many other contributors and interesting items. And questions, comments and snide remarks. Space does not allow me to include all. I offer my deep thanks to all who contributed, and I ask you to keep sending me email at [JRNews@nyc.rr.com](mailto:JRNews@nyc.rr.com).





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# Condition Census – Bust Half Dimes 1792 – 1837

**Steven A. Crain**

Much has transpired since publication of the last Bust half dime census, in December 2001. The hobby has lost two giants, in the personages of Russell J. Logan and Jules Reiver, who were both mentor and friend to many of us. Their significant collections of half dimes were, or are about to be sold, and dispersed into the body of future collectors. Several other significant half dime collections were similarly dispersed, including the unmatched early half dime collection of Ed Price, and the massive collection of William A. Harmon, absolutely complete from 1792 through 1873. Accordingly, these major collections are not included in the present census, although many of their coins have migrated to the collections of present members. I felt it would be instructive to tabulate these major collections, as “Archived Collections”, in the manner set forth by Charles Horning in the last dime census. The collections of Russell J. Logan (RJL), Jules Reiver (JR), Ed Price (EP), and William A. Harmon (WAH) are tabulated in the following charts, although their contents are not included in the calculations of total pieces reported, average grade, and maximum grade. It is worthy of note that the Price collection of early half dimes was not only the highest grade collection ever assembled, but also the most complete collection ever assembled, including two die marriages discovered by Ed Price during the course of assembling his collection. It may also now be revealed that Mr. Price maintained and reported two significant collections of early half dimes, listed herein as EP1 and EP2.

It is interesting, indeed illuminating, to attempt to follow specific coins, sold via auction from the archived collections to present collections. Such a provenance study emphasizes one important caveat in these census surveys – that we rely solely upon the owner’s grading and attributions, and these may be subject to change once a coin changes hands, particularly with the popularity of third party grading services. I will leave discussion of this ‘grade-flation’ issue for another time.

At the ANA Summer Convention in Atlanta, in July of 2001, as the first JRCS census of half dimes conducted since the publication of “The Federal Half Dimes 1792 – 1837” was being compiled, I recall asking then census keeper Russ Logan how he was going to report the census, taking into account the recent introduction of the remarriage concept, and the renumbering of the entire series. In the concise and erudite manner that so characterized him, he replied simply “I cannot publish what is not reported to me”. Indeed, as the mantle of half dime census keeper was handed over to me, I, too, worried how to reconcile the various collections, some using the Valentine numbers, some using the new Logan/McCloskey numbers, some electing to report the various remarriage numbers, and some not. It was a simple matter to cross reference the Valentine numbers to the new LM numbers, but not so easy for the remarriages. Most JRCS half dime collectors today have embraced the Logan/McCloskey numbering system, and reported their collections using the

new LM numbers. But only about half of the participants differentiated the various remarriages, designating a specific chronological die pairing (e.g., LM-8.1 or LM-8.2, etc.). Many simply designated the overall marriage generically (e.g., LM-8), with no further specificity.

The challenge was to determine the best method by which to compile and report members' holdings of the 91 different die marriages in the traditional manner, while also providing for inclusion of the 31 remarriages for those who chose to report them. The accompanying chart represents the best method by which to tabulate all of the reported information, including specific remarriages as reported, while at the same time maintaining the traditional listing of the 91 basic marriages. In the chart, the 91 basic die marriages are tabulated in the white boxes as a census of collections. The fifteen numbered vertical columns represent the fifteen largest and most complete collections reported, listed by JRCS membership number, in decreasing order of completeness, while the horizontal (white) rows represent the 91 basic LM die marriages (cross referenced to Valentine numbers). For those collectors who elected to report specific remarriages, those are reported in the gray boxes. For all collections, the highest grade specimen reported for any marriage which contains a remarriage is listed in the white box and is included in the average grade calculation. Any examples of remarriages reported (including the highest grade specimen used in the average grade calculation) are tabulated in the gray boxes. This method of tabulation allows direct comparison of collections, by completeness and by average grade, regardless of inclusion of the remarriages, without unnecessarily reducing a collector's average grade if he elected to include the remarriages. The "TOTAL MARRIAGES" box represents the total number of generic marriages (of a maximum of 91) in a specific collection, while the "TOTAL REMARRIAGES" box represents the total number of remarriages (of a maximum of 50)<sup>1</sup> in a specific collection. The "AVERAGE GRADE" box is the calculated average grade only for the 91 basic die marriages, and does not include the remarriages.

At the right hand side of the chart are three columns designated "PCS", "AVG", and "MAX". These represent the total number of pieces reported (PCS) for a given marriage or remarriage, including smaller collections not listed and duplicates, the average grade (AVG) for a given marriage or remarriage for all reported collections, and the highest grade reported (MAX) for a given marriage or remarriage.

Although there is nothing in the JRCS by-laws requiring members' participation in the various census surveys, and that is how it should be, certainly the validity of any data to be derived from such surveys is directly proportional to the level of participation. With broad and widespread participation, representing multiple members' collections and dupe boxes, the information to be learned from the census is significantly more representative of the true availability. Conversely, with a much smaller participation, the accuracy of the data is less meaningful. In the BHNC, participation in census surveys is required; in the EAC, only members who participate in the census receive the census data. While I would not necessarily lobby for either of those two options, I would strenuously argue for a significantly wider participation in future census surveys, if, indeed, they are to be continued.



While participation in this census was low in comparison to recent surveys, we did have one new member report just one half dime in his collection, but it was the only 1792 half dime reported, and a truly significant coin, listed under NM (new member). Several other members, with current significant collections, and who have reported in earlier censuses, elected not to report their holdings in this census.

Some significant changes are to be noted in the rarity ratings for two of the rarest marriages in the Capped Bust half dime series, although the data that led to these revisions was not furnished as part of this specific census; it came from information furnished independently to the census keeper. Indeed, not even a hint of the revised rarity ratings for these two die marriages could be gleaned from the data reported herein, adding further credibility to the argument for wider participation in the census surveys. The 1833 LM-5/V10, previously represented by just three specimens, and consequently an R8, has fallen to R7+ with the recent appearance, on eBay, of a fourth confirmed specimen. The condition census of this rarest of all Capped Bust half dimes is now represented as follows:

(61, 55, 20, 20?)

The fourth specimen was successfully won by a JRCS member who is the owner of the AU-55 specimen listed above, but who elected not to participate in this census survey. As the under bidder, I have not actually seen the coin, but it appears to be a VF specimen, and its existence has certainly been confirmed. Thus, there are no longer any (known) R8 die marriages in the Capped Bust half dime series.

In the previous census, published in the December 2001 issue of the **John Reich Journal**, Russ Logan surmised that the 1830 LM-11/V14 would be the next die marriage to fall from R7 status, and that is precisely what has happened. In this census survey alone, nine (9) specimens are reported, including several examples not reported in the previous census, and at least another five are known to exist, resulting in an overall R6+ rating for this very rare die marriage. I have long known of the die pairing for this marriage, long before its existence could be confirmed, and along with several other JRCS members, we relentlessly searched bourse floors for several years, to no avail, for a confirming specimen. The original 'discovery coin' belonged to a California collector and JRCS member, but who declined offers to have the coin independently confirmed and published. Then, in 1997, at the New York ANA Summer Convention, Dr. Glenn Peterson reported finding a low grade confirming specimen, and an EF-45 specimen simultaneously appeared. Since that time, due in part to the increased publicity, several additional specimens have been reported. It is intriguing to think that a die marriage could remain undiscovered for over 160 years, and then be so quickly reduced to R6 status in the subsequent decade.

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1. There are a total of nineteen (19) die marriages for which there are remarriages. In those particular nineteen die marriages, the first marriage is designated LM-x.1, and the subsequent thirty one remarriages are designated LM-x.2, LM-x.3, etc. If we add the 31 remarriages to the 19 first marriages, the total number of die pairings listed with the decimal point designation is fifty (50).



# Capped Bust Half Dime Census

Steven A. Crain

CAPPED BUST HALF DIME CENSUS																					
DATE	L/M	V	R	323	326	888	263	1157	824	411	19	835	869	194	721	1185	611	1124	PCS	AVG	MAX
1829	1	7	2	63	55	58	20	40	62	50									8	49.714	63
	2	3	1	63	55	25	20	58	40	62	40		45	40					11	44.8	63
	3	2	2	62	58	50	35	30	8	64	50		15						13	41.333	64
	4	13	3	63	58	40	25	30	58	63	30				40				11	45.222	63
	5	6	1	60	55	8	25	58	40	58			20			15			10	37.667	60
	6	5	5	64	58	50	62	20	50	62	45				30				9	49	64
	6.1			6															1	6	6
	6.2			45	58						45				30				4	44.5	58
	6.3			64	50		62	20	50	62									8	51.333	64
	7	4	4	64	58	25	40	63	50	50	50	12		40					11	45.2	64
	7.1			61	58			63	50										5	58	63
	7.2			64	45					40	50	12		40					6	41.833	64
	7.3			64	50		40	12		50									8	43.2	64
	8	17	7	61	45	25													5	43.667	61
	9	11	5	62	53	50	20	62	20		45		12						13	40.5	62
	10	16	5	64	63	30	12		20	62	50								9	43	64
	11	18	6	58	53	25	8		2										6	29.2	58
	12	10	6	62	40	40	15	35	15		35								8	34.571	62
	13	12	1	63	62	40	35	35	50	58	58	20	30					55	12	46	63
	13.1			62	62		35	35	40				30						8	44	62
	13.2			63	50				50										4	54.333	63
	14	9	4	61	55	55	50	8	40	50	40		10						9	41	61
	15	8	4	58	58	20	15	40	20										7	35.167	58
	15.1			58	58			40	20										5	44	58
	15.2			58	40		15												3	37.667	58
	16	14	2	64	62	8	35	63	55										6	47.833	64
	16.1			64	53		35	63	55										7	54	64
	16.2			63	62														2	62.5	63
	17	15	4	63	50	50	50	12		55	35								10	45	63
	18	1	5	58	58	30	35	30	12	58		50			12				13	38.111	58
1830	1	10	4	64	63	20	40	20	35	45	55	12							9	39.333	64
	1.1			8	63				35		55	12							8	34.6	63
	1.2			64	45		40	20	12										12	36.2	64
	2	9	3	65	55	40	25	63	30	63	50	40		30					15	46.1	65
	3	8	2	64	55	50	18	25	30	63				30			53		13	43.111	64
	4	3	2	63	59	50	35	30	45	63	60		12	30					10	44.7	63
	4.1			60	59		20	30	45				12	30					7	36.571	60
	4.2			63			35			63	60								4	55.25	63
	5	13	7	58	6							15							4	26.333	58
	6	4	5	65	58	45	20	12	8	58		15							13	35.125	65
	7	7	2	63	58	55	25	12	20	58		25			40			50	11	40.6	63
	8	6	1	61	58	25	45	40	40	58	55								8	47.75	61
	9	5	4	64	58	25	6	50	30	62	58		10						9	40.333	64
	9.1			64	58		6		30		58								7	43.2	64
	9.2			62	55			50	8	53			10						7	39.667	62
	10	12	6	53	55	8	55												4	42.75	55
	11	14	6	35	53	12	58	12		15	20								9	29.286	58
	12	11	4	64	50	30	30	62	45	55	45			25		20			11	42.6	64
	13	2	3	60	58	10	62	58	30	45	53		35						10	45.667	62
	14	1	3	62	58	12	18	8	40	63	25	25	20						10	33.1	63



CAPPED BUST HALF DIME CENSUS

DATE	L/M	V	R	323	326	888	263	1157	824	411	19	35	869	194	721	1185	611	1124	PCS	AVG	MAX
1831	1	6	1	63	58	25	15	55	40	60	40	30	35						10	42.1	63
	1.1			45	30							12	20						4	26.75	45
	1.2			45	50			55	40	63		30	35						8	45.429	63
	1.3			63	58		15		20	55	40		6						10	36.714	63
	2	7	3	65	60	25	30	50	45	62	20								15	44.625	65
	3	2	4	65	60	25	25	25	40	62	40								14	42.75	65
	4	4	2	63	61	12	12	58	45				45						8	42.286	63
	5	5	1	61	62	40	15	50	25			12	35	40					12	37.778	62
	6	1	1	64	62	55	50	40	20	61		12	40	30		45	55		20	44.5	64
	7	3	2	63	58	40	6	45		58			50						9	45.714	63
1832	1	10	4	58	55	63	35	12	12	64		30	45		40				13	41.4	64
	2	3	3	63	63	12	35	40	40						45				8	42.571	63
	3	1	1	62	58	50	6	35	50	50		12	15						15	37.556	62
	4	12	4	63	58	25	45	62	45	62	30	10	20			20			18	40	63
	5	8	1	64	58	10	45	40	50	60	45	20	45	40					25	43.364	64
	6	11	4	65	55	12	35	25	25		10	12		40					10	31	65
	7	9	2	64	55	10	35	62	45	63	50	20			61				18	46.5	64
	8	5	3	63	58	50	35	35	20	60	40	45	30	45					11	43.727	63
	8.1			45	58						40	12	30						7	37	58
	8.2			62							40	20							3	40.667	62
	8.3			30				20											2	25	30
	8.4			63	45		35	35	20		35	45		45					10	40.375	63
	8.5			61															1	61	61
	9	14	7	58	45	10		8	4	30	4								7	22.714	58
	9.1			58	45			8	4										5	28.75	58
	9.2										4								1	4	4
	10	13	3	64	63	50	35	15	40	50	25			40					9	42.444	64
	10.1			62	45				40					40					4	46.75	62
	10.2			45				15											2	30	45
	10.3			8							20								2	14	20
	10.4			64	63						25								7	50.667	64
	11	4	5	65	58	12	35	63	45	61	40								8	47.375	65
	11.1			64	58		35				40								4	49.25	64
	11.2			65	20		25	63	45	61									10	46.5	65
	12	2	2	63	58	58	20	55	40	50		20	50	45			58		14	47	63
	13	6	3	63	61	30	20	50	60	45	20								8	43.625	63
	14	7	4	63	58	25	30	15	12	40									10	34.714	63
1833	1	7	3	63	58	40	35	45	20	63	55		12		40				19	43.1	63
	2	9	6	55	35	12	25				12								5	27.8	55
	3	4	2	64	58	25	45	55	55	55		25					53		9	48.333	64
	3.1			64	35		45		55										4	49.75	64
	3.2			55	55														2	55	55
	3.3			61	55			55				25							4	49	61
	3.4			62	58					55									4	58.333	62
	3.5			50															1	50	50
	4	3	2	60	55	40	45	40	20	58								50	8	46	60
	4.1			60	20				20										3	33.333	60
	4.2			55	55		45	40		53									5	49.6	55
	4.3			45	25				12	58									4	35	58
	5	10	7	61	20														2	40.5	61
	6	8	6	64	55	50	20	20	20	62									9	41.571	64
	7	5	2	63	58	40	40	50	20	65		30	12			30			13	40.8	65
	8	2	3	62	58	25	10	35	45	40		20	15	45					12	35.5	62
	9	6	2	62	55	25	12	12	55	63	40	30	45		45				14	40.364	63
	10	1	1	64	55	25	35	63	20	62		30	12						12	40.667	64

DATE	L/M	V	R	323	326	888	263	1157	824	411	19	835	869	194	721	1185	611	1124	PCS	AVG	MAX
1834	1	5	2	63	58	25	15	20	18	62	40		10						13	34.556	63
	2	1	1	63	58	40	30	53	45	62	30	40	20		53				24	44.909	63
	3	2	3	61	50	40	50	12	30	64		20							9	40.875	64
	4	4	1	62	58	50	20	40	60	63		12	20			10			15	39.5	63
	5	3	3	64	55	40	45	12	58	58									10	47.429	64
1835	1	2	2	62	55	50	12	20	50	45	20	12		40					17	36.6	62
	2	8	4	63	58	8	30	12	55	63	50	15							9	39.333	63
	3	3	1	63	58	25	18	12	50	50	30	20	40	45		35			24	37.167	63
	4	11	3	62	61	50	25	30	40	58	40	12		45					17	42.3	62
	6	10	3	63	58	30	35	8	53	64	50	15	62	35	12				12	40.417	64
	5.1			58	55			8	6			15	62		12				10	30.857	62
	5.2			30	58		35		53	63	50		62	35					11	48.25	63
	6	9	2	62	50	25	30	40	8			8	20						12	30.375	62
	7	4	3	64	55	25	40	25	20	58	50	20	40					50	16	40.636	64
	8	5	2	63	55	25	35	30	45	58		8	15	45					14	37.9	63
	8.1			50	45			30	45			8	15						6	32.167	50
	8.2			63	55		35	20	40	55				45					9	44.714	63
	9	6	2	64	53	25	35	4	58		20	30							8	36.125	64
	9.1			64	45		35	4	58			30							8	39.333	64
	9.2			62	53						20								9	45	62
	10	7	1	65	55	12	20	50	55	50	30	40	30		8		58		22	39.417	65
	11	1	4	62	55	50	15	20	20	50		20	12	40			58		14	36.545	62
1836	1	5	5	66	55	63	18	12	40	35	45			30					9	40.444	66
	1.1			50	55			12						30					4	36.75	55
	1.2			66	45		18	8	40	35	45								15	36.714	66
	2	1	3	60	55	40	50	62	40	55	50		55						13	51.889	62
	3	4	1	63	64	40	45	30	12	58		4			53				18	41	64
	4	2	2	66	58	8	45	25	12	50		12	30						12	34	66
	5	6	2	62	50	12	40	58	40	64		30	40						12	44	64
	6	3	3	61	58	62	20	53	40	53		12	35						14	43.778	62
	7	7	4	62	55	12	6	40	20	50									10	35	62
1837	1	3	1	64	62	40	12	20	20	58	50	20	35						15	38.1	64
	2	4	5	61	40	12	35	8	12	12	20								11	25	61
	3	5	6	58	30	12	6		45										6	30.6	58
	4	2	3	63	50	25	15	30	20	55	30	10	15						17	31.3	63
	5	1	1	63	53	20	35	15	30	58						35			10	38.625	63
TOTAL MARRIAGES				91	91	89	87	83	83	74	50	45	42	21	13	8	6	4	91 KNOWN		
AVERAGE GRADE				62	55	31	29	35	34	55	38	21	28	38	37	26	56	51	*See Note 1		
TOT. REMARRIAGES				49	41	0	19	23	26	14	16	11	10	7	2	0	0	0			



1829 LM6.2



1832 LM8.2





# Flowing Hair & Drapped Bust Half Dime Census

Steven A. Crain

ARCHIVED COLLECTIONS								CURRENT COLLECTIONS									
DATE	L/M	V	R	EP1	EP2	JR	WAH	323	326	888	847	411	1124	NM	PCS	AVG	MAX
1792	1	1	3	50		15	20							8	1	8	8
1794	1	1	6	55	53	20	20	55	4						2	30	55
	2	2	5	55	50	15	30				20				1	20	20
	3	3	4	58	55	50	40								0		
	4	4	4	50	40	50	50			8					1	8	8
1795	1	1	6	58	50		40	64							1	64	64
	2	10	7	63	55	35		61							1	61	61
	3	2	5	60	55	40	20		7						1	7	7
	4	3	6	60	50	12	35	55							1	55	55
	5	9	6	53	50	20		30							1	30	30
	6	7	6	55	50	30	20	30							1	30	30
	7	8	6	40	20	40	45	20							1	20	20
	8	5	3	60	40	50	45					53	30		2	41	53
	9	6	4	61	30	30	20								0		
	10	4	3	63	50	45	50								0		
1796	1	1	3	62	50	40	55			6					1	6	6
	2	2	6	62	55	30	40	40	6	12					3	19	40
1797	1	2	3	55	45	40	40		10	6					2	8	10
	2	4	4	55	55	55	60			4					1	4	4
	3	3	5	58	50	6	20								0		
	4	1	6	60	53	30	15	30		6					2	18	30
1800	1	1	3	55	50	45	45	4		12					2	8	12
	2	3	7	50	40	20		58							1	58	58
	3	2	4	50		30	30	40	20						2	30	40
	4	4	7	30	20			20	15						2	17	20
1801	1	3	7	4	4	20		8	4						2	6	8
	2	1,2	4	63	55	40	45	53	20		35				3	36	53
1802	1	1	5	45	40		6								0		
1803	1	3	6	60	60	40	20	45	30						2	37	45
	2	1	4	61	55	15	45		8						1	8	8
	3	2	3	55	40	30	45								0		
1805	1	1	4	50	45	12	30	30	20						2	25	30
COINS OWNED				32	30	29	27	17	11	7	2	1	1	1	32 KNOWN		
AVERAGE GRADE				54	46	31	34	38	13	8	27	53	30	8			



# Archived Collections Capped Bust Half Dimes

Steven A. Crain

ARCHIVED COLLECTIONS						
DATE	L/M	V	R	RJL	JR	WAH
1829	1	7	2	55	60	62
	2	3	1	55	50	63
	3	2	2	50	45	50
	4	13	3	55	55	63
	5	6	1	55	50	62
	6	5	5	63	45	64
	7	4	4	50	50	63
	8	17	7	55		
	9	11	5	55	50	
	10	16	5	50	15	63
	11	18	6	55	40	
	12	10	6	60	15	55
	13	12	1	55	60	60
	14	9	4	60	12	
	15	8	4	55	35	45
	16	14	2	50	55	60
	17	15	4	60	30	64
	18	1	5	55	35	62
1830	1	10	4	55	60	64
	2	9	3	50	55	64
	3	8	2	50	40	65
	4	3	2	60	50	63
	5	13	7	55	60	
	6	4	5	60	20	58
	7	7	2	45	50	62
	8	6	1	50	60	64
	9	5	4	65	55	45
	10	12	6	50	20	
	11	14	6	35		
	12	11	4	50	60	62
	13	2	3	60	45	60
	14	1	3	50	45	65

DATE	L/M	V	R	RJL	JR	WAH
1831	1	6	1	60	60	63
	2	7	3	55	45	62
	3	2	4	50	60	64
	4	4	2	60	45	65
	5	5	1	55	60	55
	6	1	1	50	60	63
	7	3	2	50	60	60
1832	1	10	4	45	50	62
	2	3	3	60	50	55
	3	1	1	55	65	62
	4	12	4	50	60	63
	5	8	1	60	60	64
	6	11	4	50	30	60
	7	9	2	55	60	63
	8	5	3	60	60	58
	9	14	7	60	40	
	10	13	3	55	60	62
	11	4	5	45	40	63
	12	2	2	50	50	60
	13	6	3	55	55	45
	14	7	4	50	35	60
1833	1	7	3	55	50	62
	2	9	6	45	60	
	3	4	2	60	65	63
	4	3	2	60	40	61
	5	10	7	63		
	6	8	6	60	50	63
	7	5	2	55	50	58
	8	2	3	40	40	45
	9	6	2	55	60	55
	10	1	1	55	60	62



DATE	L/M	V	R	RJL	JR	WAH
1834	1	5	2	55	55	63
	2	1	1	55	50	60
	3	2	3	60	60	60
	4	4	1	55	60	64
	5	3	3	55	40	60
1835	1	2	2	55	55	55
	2	8	4	50	60	64
	3	3	1	50	60	63
	4	11	3	60	50	61
	5	10	3	55	50	55
	6	9	2	50	60	60
	7	4	3	55	50	60
	8	5	2	55	50	55
	9	6	2	55	45	63
	10	7	1	55	63	63
	11	1	4	50	50	50
1836	1	5	5	65	55	
	2	1	3	50	50	63
	3	4	1	60	50	63
	4	2	2	50	55	60
	5	6	2	50	63	55
	6	3	3	40	65	64
	7	7	4	60	50	60
1837	1	3	1	55	45	55
	2	4	5	50	40	
	3	5	6	50	35	
	4	2	3	55	50	62
	5	1	1	50	50	63
TOTAL MARRIAGES				91	88	78
AVERAGE GRADE				54	50	60



1829 LM7.2 LM Plate coin



1830 LM 1.1 LM Plate coin



1831 LM2



1830 LM 11



# Retained and Full Cuds on Bust Quarters

Rory Rea

The last 2 issues of the *John Reich Journal* had articles pertaining to cuds on half dimes and dimes. They have really brought together some excellent work concerning not only the identification of retained cuds, full cuds and even internal cuds but also brought in a bit of history behind die steel deterioration. I have enjoyed both of these articles very much especially so with having the ability to view the actual photographs of many of these rare examples. In lieu of duplicating their efforts by readdressing the same introductory format in this article I thought it would be nice to add in some additional die state information with pictures that has not been published on bust quarters.

As many of you may already know trying to locate a rare bust quarter by variety is difficult enough let alone obtaining examples with retained or full cuds. I have been somewhat surprised at what little has turned up considering the efforts of many who “travel to the ends of the world” searching and to the dedicated individuals who have already participated greatly with the pictorial census work on bust quarters.

I have watched this series increase in interest little by little over a 14 year period with the last 3 peaking with much higher enthusiasm by not only the new collectors entering the market but by many seasoned original die hard variety specialists trying to complete their long range goals. With that, the supply of already scarce examples of retained cuds and major die breaks seems to have dried up considerably. I have had to pursue old contacts with greater persistence in order to obtain needed material-something I was hoping to do on my own accord through “cherry-picking”. No, I must say I am not as lucky as Kirk Gorman who seems to have the Midas touch, (see JR Journal volume 16/ Issue 3 pages 17-18, an excellent article entailed Cherry pickers Delight)-but if I can secretly manage to rub elbows with him at the next show just think of the possibilities!

Below is a listing of 16 different varieties displaying some form of dentil and rim crumbling, retained cuds, internal cuds or full cuds in the bust quarter series. Please note I have not verified or documented any die state examples from the late Jules Reiver’s collection at this time so please remember to add in his examples for your records.



**1796 B-2b**

The 1796 B-2b early quarter has one of the most dramatic obverse shattered dies known in the quarter series. Seeing the number and severity of cracks in the upper portion of the die traveling from 11-2 o'clock, it is a wonder a full cud has never been found for this marriage. However, considering its extremely low mintage it is very likely one may not exist.

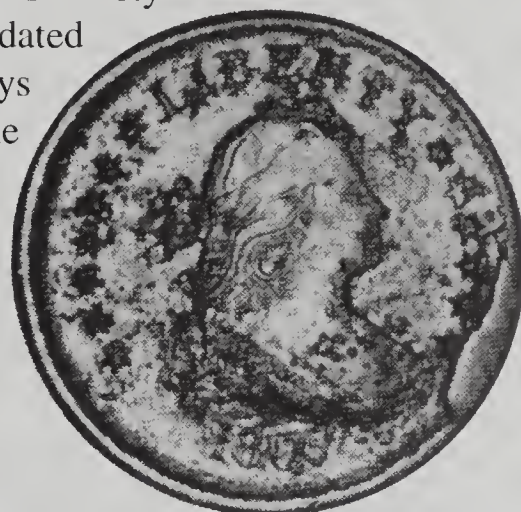


Currently the 1796 B-2b is an R-6 as a late die state (LDS). To this day I have located and photographed 21 different 1796 B-2b's in my database with a possibility of one more that has not been verified. Twenty-five percent are above the EF range. Thirty percent are in the VF range with VF-30 being the highest grade. Forty five percent are below the VF range while twenty percent are in the good and below range.

### 1805 B-2b



The 1805 B-2b develops a retained cud that begins from the rim through stars 10-13 back again to the lower portion of the rim displaying shortened dentils. As verified through Jules Reiver's original findings in his variety identification manual (VIM) dated 1987 this late die state displays weakness at the left side of the R in LIBERTY (not shown) where the earlier die state has a weak right side of R in LIBERTY. There have not been any full cud reported to date.



*Photo courtesy Bowers & Merena, Inc.*

However, as you can see by the picture on the far right the Montroville Dickenson Mule displays a full cud but did not completely break 'as outlined' by the original crack.

### 1806 B-2b

Although the 1806 B-2 is not rare as a variety (R-2), it is turning out to be very rare when encountered displaying a circumference of reverse rim and dentil crumbling. As you can see, the first set of crumbling starts above E1 and moves just past E-2 in STATES. The second set of dentil and rim crumbling starts above the O in OF to just above the R in AMERICA. I purchased this coin from HLRC and was very excited to study and photograph this piece once I got it home. I was so focused on the extensive die breaks and rim crumbling that I didn't notice the doubling on most all the stars on the reverse until days later. This particular example also displays a weak obverse (8-11 o'clock) with a corresponding weak reverse.



### 1806 B-3

The 1806 B-3 is known to have light obverse dentil crumbling from star 7-LIBE and ends up with an advanced break from star 4-B and 1 to star 1. The reverse will show a very small patch of rim crumbling above M in AMERICA.



**1806 B-6**

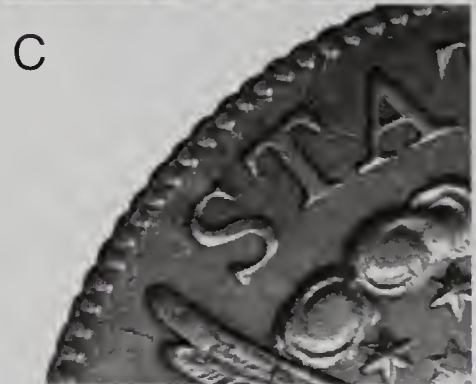
The 1806 B-6 is the first in the entire bust quarter series displaying a “full progression” of die stages ending up with a full cud. Because of the overwhelming response from collectors and dealers contributing their examples to the quarter books I have been able to offer to you a nice display of thumbnail illustrations. Please note this variety, along with the 1806 B-5, is still a die state “work in progress” and needs more verification at this time.

Although this picture does not clearly show a crack between the S and T in STATES there is happens to be a “very faint” one never the less. If you own a high-grade example without this die crack please let me know so I can capture a good photograph (A).

This particular die state is a re-marriage to the 1806 B-5. Here the heavier crack is clearly seen between the S-T then traveling across the top of T moving into the field in a gradual arc progressing into the dentils just above the left foot of A1. There are also two small stray cracks (see arrows) forming on the top left outside loop of S. This is one of the most plentiful stages available (B).

As you can see we now have a complete crack running from rim-ST-rim. Notice the top left crack at S has now given way to accomplish this link while the lower crack appears to remain more on the upper surface level at this time (C).

Here you can see this upper section has now broken off completely from the reverse die forming a full cud. These terminal die states are extremely rare with only about three to four examples reported (D).

**1806 B-8**

Yes, you see it pictured here for the first time, a very rare 1806 B-8 with a beautiful and dramatic reverse cud! Unknown to Browning when he published his work in 1925 and has been unique publicly since it was auctioned by Heritage Numismatic Auctions, Inc. 9/24-26/87 Lot 384. This piece, mentioned by Walter Breen on page 41 in the Browning reprint by Bowers and Merena, Inc. has been on the minds of many collectors and dealers since publication. Without a doubt, this is



by far my favorite LDS bust quarter in the entire series. Not only is this the rarest variety of the entire draped bust type but it is also the only example to have any kind of significance in the form of surface area breaks. I have always wondered when the day would come when I would get a chance to photograph this piece let alone have the chance to be able to own it and become the next caretaker. With that, I want to especially thank Larry Briggs and the previous “unknown owner(s)” for the opportunity to be able to negotiate on this wonderful piece-I remember the many evenings speaking with Larry until finally ending up with what seems to have been about 29 phone calls to end the deal, wow! Rare early federal silver coinage at its best!

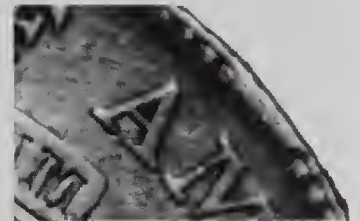
### 1806 B-9



The last in the draped bust series is the 1806 B-9. Here you will notice multiple rim breaks scattered about the reverse rim from about 11-2 o'clock. Certainly a nice display on a common type early quarter which should not be too difficult to find in this LDS. This is one variety the persistent collector shouldn't have to break their piggy bank to obtain.

### 1818 B-4 & B-5

A very small reverse rim break can be found over AM in America. The Late Jules Reiver owns this particular example. Photo courtesy of Dr. Glenn Peterson.

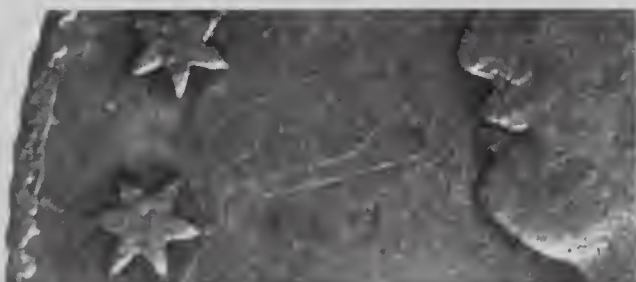


### 1819 B-4

One of my favorite marriages in the large size capped bust series is the 1819 B-4 which shows two dramatic retained cuds. Typically, many collectors feel this is one of the most interesting die state progressions in the entire early quarter series. It is a very popular date that many collectors strive to purchase both in the early and the late die states. Here



you can clearly see obverse die breaks on this nice high-grade example around and through the date forming two retained cuds. Not only do you see extensive shifting within the numerals 8-1-9, but also notice the dentils are shorter in height as in the 1805 B-2. I believe these two retained cuds may have occurred very close to the same time.



### 1820 B-5

Although this underrated variety is minor as far as die states dramatics, it does come with obverse rim crumbling between stars 3-4.



## 1825 B-2



A



B



C



D



E

The 1825 B-2 seems to be the second most popular large size variety with attempting to obtain multiple die states or stages for their collection. You just can't lose with these. I was fortunate to own all of the die states listed here just a couple of years ago. It is one of the few collections ever assembled for completeness. In fact, at this time it is only possible to form 2 complete 'five piece sets' due to the scarcity of two pieces-see pictures B and E .

This is the fourth rarest die state but could possibly become the most common in the future, time will tell. I have documented **eight** examples as of 11-04 (A).

This is the rarest die state of them all. I presently know of only **two** examples as of 9-05 (B).

This is the most common die state available to collectors today. I have documented **thirteen** examples as of 11-04. Actually if you think about it 13 is not that many (C)!

The third rarest die state known to me as of 11-04. I have documented **four** pieces in my database (D).

This is the second rarest die state, and obviously the most desirable. **Three** pieces have been found as of 9-05. I have owned two of these and the third was in route to me on 5-24-04 when the item was lost via insured mail and never recovered (E).



### 1825 B-3

The 1825 B-3 appears to be a “first choice” with collectors when it comes to assembling a progression of dramatic die states especially when it ends with a cud. Here you will see why so many people love to collect these beautiful early mint made products. If you are looking for information on the possibility of assembling a “three piece set”, I can tell you that according to my records (as of 3-05) there is a possibility of putting together seven or maybe eight complete collections. Yet as I look over my list I see only five or six collectors may actually be able to achieve that goal.

This particular EDS is very rare with only about 10-11 pieces known to me as of 10-05 (F).



This is a very nice example of a retained cud where the die section actually starts to shift causing NITE to become weakly struck. This is my favorite die state in the large size series. As of 3-05, I have documented 9 different examples grading from VG-10 to EF-45 (G).



This illustration shows the 1825 B-3 after it develops a full cud over NITE. An impressive example to say the least! These late die states are only currently represented in grades from AG-3 to about F-15. As of 3-05 I have documented 13 examples in my database (H).



### 1828 B-1

I was very happy when Mike Clark sent this coin to me for photographing. It is my hope to be able to locate and photograph a full cud some day.



### 1836 B-1

Here you will notice a small internal rim cud present on the 1836 B-1 just above Miss Liberty's eyebrow.



### 1836 B-3

This is the last in the series - an 1837 B-3 displaying a very small internal cud in front of Miss Liberty's ear. Photo courtesy of American Numismatic Rarities, The C.L. Lee sale, 9-18-05 Lot 298.



### Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Rick Montgomery and Maggie Dent at Numismatic Guaranty Corporation of America for their friendly help. They facilitated the removal and reslabbing of the 1796 B-2b early quarter to be removed and re-holdered for the purpose of close up photography and further research. Although quite possibly an "exception to the rule" it is a positive effort of any grading service to allow removal and re-holdering of significant coins for the purpose of numismatic research. I also wish to thank American Numismatic Rarities as well as Bowers and Merena, Inc., for their use of the above-labeled photos in this article. Special thanks to Dr. Glenn Peterson, Mike Clark, John Kovach, and Gene Miller who graciously sent me individual examples of quarters for the purpose of furthering numismatic studies in the area of bust quarters. Lastly, to the late Jules Reiver for his sincere compassion and efforts for all that he has done in the field of bust quarters.

If you have any counterstamped bust quarters, errors, or rare varieties to advance my research, please contact me at [Roryrea@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Roryrea@sbcglobal.net) or (714) 292-8080 (cell).

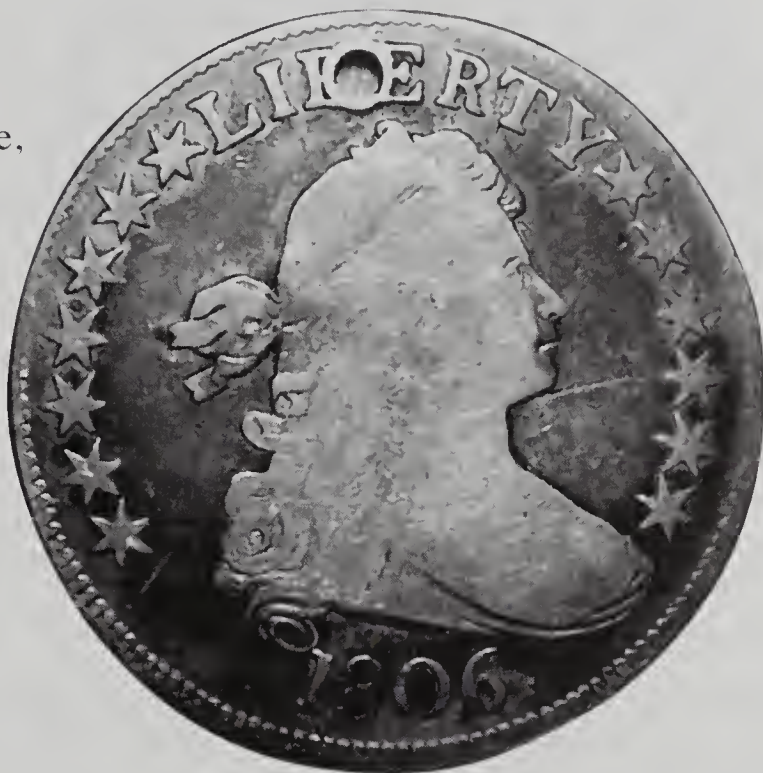




# Discovery of Draped Bust Half Dollar 1806 O.129

**Bill Nyberg**

A new Draped Bust Half Dollar die marriage, with a new obverse, was co-discovered by two very astute Pacific Northwest numismatists on eBay recently. David Hatfield of Oregon was the winner of the auction and is the owner of the 1806 O.129 discovery coin. Robert Zornes of Washington State was the underbidder. Both Hatfield and Zornes had identified 1806 Reverse L on eBay, but could not attribute the obverse to any known die listed in the Overton reference book. The 1806 O.129 discovery was made just over a year after the new 1807 O.115 was confirmed in June of 2004.



Many people know Robert Zornes as a knowledgeable collector/dealer who has a strong interest in the study of Bust Half Dollar die varieties. On October 6, 2005, Zornes placed his first bid on the coin, just over an hour into the start of the auction. He attributed Reverse L and recognized the late state reverse die crack, and he concluded it was not a contemporary counterfeit. Since star 1 was placed substantially higher than any 1801 through 1807 Draped Bust Half Dollar, Zornes thought there was a chance that the coin had been altered and the stars possibly repositioned by a skilled metal artist, and then worn down as jewelry. This possibility, and with no return policy on the auction, prompted Zornes to reduce his maximum bid consideration from \$3700 to \$1776. Seven other people had bid up to \$150, evidently not recognizing the coin as a possible new die marriage.

David Hatfield has been specifically focusing his efforts to find new varieties in all early United States copper, silver, and gold coinage. He had some early false alarms – a 1794 large cent attributed from an inaccurate reference photo, another with a composite photo of a mismatched obverse and reverse. Some “new varieties” were the product of tooling, hyper-aging of reproduction pieces, and one large cent “so worn and damaged the I’m afraid no one else will confirm that it is a new variety, let alone a large cent.”

From the Collector’s Universe PCGS US Coin Forum message board, Hatfield explained,

“Four years ago I started looking for new varieties. With the quantity of sellers on eBay I figured coins would come to light that had never been viewed by experts, and new varieties were bound to be out there. When I



saw the 1806 half, I took a pass through the Overton book, and when I came to the last variety without finding a match for the obverse the familiar heart palpitation started. I double checked and checked other sources, in case there was an error in Overton, and still couldn't find a match for the obverse. When I bid, I new what it wasn't, but I didn't know what it was. I was unable to find a photo or description of O-128, so I figured the holey half was either O-128 or a new variety."

Hatfield placed a brilliant and confident bid in the final seconds of the auction that was well in excess of the price realized and Zornes' original high bid consideration. The eBay auction had gone the distance and was justifiably sold to its rightful new owner for \$1801 on October 11, 2005.

This coin was previously owned by Robertson Shinnick, a self-described "general practitioner" who does not collect by die variety. Shinnick is famous for his "holey coin hat" and "holey coin vest" that includes his large collection of holed coins, worn for all to see. He had purchased the coin at the 2003 Florida United Numismatists (FUN) convention, trading an Irish coin and some world proof sets for it, he figures he had \$40 to \$50 into the coin. Shinnick had worn his undiscovered 1806 O.129 on his holey coin vest at coin shows and conventions, where it had been momentarily seen by hundreds of collectors and dealers!

After upgrading to a nicer holed Draped Bust Half, Shinnick traded the coin for some "stuff" to his friend Richard Sayre in September, 2005. Sayre also did not attribute the coin, and placed the coin on eBay less than a month after the trade. Their friendship and actions, along with some help from eBay, had allowed this important discovery to commence.

After the eBay auction, Shinnick noticed the price realized and decided to post a message on the PCGS Forum that was titled "Sometimes you get a nice cherrypick. Then sometimes you GET cherrypicked." After consolation by some members, and some friendly ribbing by others, Shinnick asked, "What IS the variety, anyway?" The first person to notice something different was Bust Half Dime collector Richard Meaney, who observed, "I'm not an expert, but I believe it doesn't match any of the R-6 or R-7 listed by Overton. So maybe these ebayers were experts who noted that it is a unique variety not listed in Overton and therefore an R-8 discovery coin!"

A few minutes later I noticed the post and looked at the eBay images. I was able to attribute



1806 Reverse L by using my pick-up point for Heraldic Eagle reverses – the lowest berry to A position, as well as the reverse die crack. I responded, “From memory looks like the reverse on O.116, I cannot place the obverse on any pointed six.” A few hours later after speeding home to look at the Overton book, I explained, “The reverse is a match for L, used on O.116, the unmistakable late state die crack and berry to A position. The obverse is similar to 11, used on O.123, 124, and the new 128 (one known obv 11, rev L). But star 7 is way too close to L. The six does not touch the drapery, which it does on obv 11. Unless it is a counterfeit or fake, which is unlikely because of the existing reverse, this may be the new discovery of 1806 O.129. A couple of very observant bidders! I need to start looking at holed coins!”

Brad Higgins was next to chime in, “This appears to be a new one. A quick blitz through the brick reveals no obverse with S7 so close to L and S1 so far from the portrait. I’m going to post this to the BHNC forum.”

Many members of the BHNC thought this coin was a new variety, pending authentication. Oregonian Tom Hartl noticed the eBay winner was from his State, and proceeded to contact David Hatfield. I contacted fellow Washingtonian Robert Zornes. Hartl quickly organized an authentication meeting for October 29, 2005, at the Pacific Northwest Numismatic Association and Willamette Coin Club 1st Annual Fall Convention & Coin Show, in Portland Oregon.

In the meantime, the drama unfolded. Word of the discovery spread like wildfire throughout cyberspace. The eBay counter for the completed auction had about 250 hits after Shinnick posted his message, within a week the counter had over 1000 hits.

The authentication meeting was attended by David Hatfield and Robert Zornes, along with BHNC members Tom Hartl, Craig Mims, Bill Nyberg, and Steve Tompkins. The following is an abbreviated report of the process we took to authenticate the coin:

The coin weighed 12.84 grams, which is appropriate for the degree of wear, and considering the approximate 0.05 gram weight loss from the hole. The diameter of the coin is the standard 32.5 mm.

All 1801 through 1807 Heraldic Eagle reverses had been checked, with Reverse L verified. The Reverse L of the coin is a very late die state (VLDS), with an advanced die crack and a small chip broken out above D in UNITED. Two LDS O.116 examples (Obverse 9, Reverse L) were used for reference at the meeting. The coin was struck after O.128 (unique, with no apparent Reverse L die crack), and also struck after O.116, where Reverse L exists prooflike with no crack, intermediate die state with a light die crack, and LDS with heavy die crack, but not as advanced as the subject coin.

All 1801 through 1807 Draped Bust obverses had been checked. The 1806 Obverse 11, used on O.123, O.124, and O.128, was the most similar, but had differences in S1, S7, and date. An obverse overlay had been done to verify the hub used to make 1806 working dies. While S1 was higher and S7 closer to L than other pointed 6 obverses, the radial distance from the center of the coin to all stars was consistent, as are known 1806 obverses (note that S7 to L

distance on previously known 1806's varies considerably, from 0.5 mm on Obverse 8 to 2.0 mm on Obverse 3). The dentils were of the style used in 1806. Although some of the dentils were worn smooth, the dentil frequency for a given distance was within the range of 1806 obverses. All obverse date numerals and letters matched those used in 1806. No obverse die cracks were noted, and the existing dentils were sharp and consistent with an early die state.



With the exception of the hole, no signs of alteration or tooling were found. There was no surface granularity, except for a small amount of corrosion by S2-S3. The ring test of the coin was identical in tone to 1806 O.120a, indicating a struck coin as opposed to a dull thud of a cast counterfeit.

One of the critical authentication tests for the coin was to verify that the edge lettering matched Edge Hub 2 (three stars after FIFTY), which was used to fabricate working edge lettering dies from mid-1795 through 1806. The edge lettering of the coin did match Edge Hub 2 lettering. The edge die state appeared more worn than 1806 O.116, but less worn than 1806 O.117, which is the notorious highly lapped "half head" final usage of Obverse 9. Since the Pre-Turban emission order has not been published for 1794-1806 halves, exact emission placement could not be done, other than 1806 O.129 came after O.116, and before O.117 (the 1806 O.117 Reverse M was also used on 1807 O.108, O.109, and O.110 as 1807 Reverse F, and O.108 was first in the 1807 emission order). There were no signs of a seam or filing marks on the edge.

The 1806 Obverse 13 diagnostics are: S1B, S2LH, S3B, S5UE, S6UH, S7B, S12LE, S13UE. S1 to curl 2.75 mm and higher than other 1806 halves. Date width 8.25 mm. S7 to L 0.25 mm, S8 to Y 0.75 mm, S13 to bust 0.75 mm. S12 and S13 inside points touch. Small die line off curl 2 (second curl from bottom), small spike on lower outside point of S1.

Some diagnostics could not be evaluated because of wear. No recut obverse stars, letters or date numerals were seen. Reverse clashing was carried over from the O.116 die marriage.

Most agreed the coin grades Good 6 details, although a split grade of VG8/G4 details may be more descriptive. Strike weakness in the eagle's right wing appeared to be a continuation of LDS O.116 Reverse L. The hole was thought to be 19th Century because of the wear pattern. It is interesting to note the coin was not often worn as jewelry, the inside of the hole had little "chain wear", just wear on the outside of the hole. The coin was possibly a pocket



piece for awhile after being holed.

All present at the meeting agreed the coin is an authentic 1806 Half Dollar and is the discovery coin for 1806 O.129, Obverse 13 (new), Reverse L. After the two and a half hour meeting ended, the coin was examined by Mark Emtman, a knowledgeable Bust coin specialist dealer, who concurred with our findings.

Robert Zornes has a theory that describes the stars of 1806 O.129 as being punched in the die by an apprentice, starting with star 7 and working down to star 1, without using a template or layout. The stars were punched a tad too close to each other which left star 1 in a position substantially higher than any other Draped Bust Half Dollar. A freehand learning process while the chief engraver was off on business somewhere else. After several strikes the error in the star positions was discovered by the returning chief engraver and the die cast aside. Zornes also stated that 1806 Reverse L, which was also used in the unique 1806 O.128 die marriage, could have been used for some experimental purposes.

It is also possible that the 1806 Reverse L working die had failed, with the advanced die crack breaking off into a rim cud, ending the 1806 O.129 die marriage. The 1806 Heraldic Eagle Half Dollar Reverses A, D, E, F, H, and P all met their demise with rim cuds.

There are now eight 1806 Half Dollar die marriages in the R.6 to R.8 rarity range, an intriguing assemblage of ultra-rarities and some relatively common varieties for the year. Many collectors believe that any additional 1806 O.129 specimens found will be few and far between because of the distinctive S1-S7 arrangement, unlike last year's 1807 O.115 discovery (three examples now known), which is strikingly similar to 1807 O.104.

The Internet's unveiling of the obscure and unknown to the masses has yielded another remarkable discovery.

#### References:

Al C. Overton, Early Half Dollar Die Varieties 1794-1836, Third Edition. 1990.

Ivan Leaman and Donald Gunnet, "Edges and Die Sequences on Early Half Dollars". America's Silver Coinage 1794-1891, Coinage of the Americas Conference at the American Numismatic Society. New York, November 1-2, 1986.

Bill Nyberg, "Discovery of a New Draped Bust Half Dollar - 1807 O.115", John Reich Journal. July, 2004.



# A Toss of a Dollar

Jack White

While enjoying a bit of summer reading, I came across a tidbit which club members should find interesting. The book, A Biography of the Great Baseball Pitcher Walter Johnson, written by his grandson, mentions a 1936 event involving Johnson and a 1796 dollar. Johnson, nearly fifty years old at the time, had just been elected to the new Baseball Hall of Fame, one of the five original members. He is generally regarded as Baseball's greatest pitcher- almost certainly the fastest. He threw with a sidearm delivery, obviously a great advantage to throwing a coin.

To quote from the book, Johnson's "...attempt to support George Washington's childhood legend of throwing a silver dollar across the Rappahannock River. The director of the George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Congressman Sol Bloom, delivered the feat physically impossible, but after inspecting the site at Fredericksburg, Virginia, Johnson agreed to defend the (probably apocryphal) story as part of the first President's 204th birthday celebration. In throwing metal washers and half-dollar pieces across the Potomac River, though, he found them difficult to control, tending to curve or sail straight up or down after 50 or 60 feet. Two days before the event Johnson reported: "I am still practicing with a dollar against my barn door. Arm getting stronger, barn door weaker."

The story attracted National attention, and 8000 curious spectators crowded the shores of the Rappahannock on February 22, 1936 along with reporters and newsreel cameras. The event was carried live over the CBS Radio Network. A preliminary toss with a lead washer fell five feet short, followed by a second practice throw with a coin that cleared the river easily. The third and official toss with a silver dollar minted in 1796 was the best yet, sailing over the opposite shore by 25 feet after traveling "an estimated 317 feet in all."

According to Bower's book, the coin had a value of fifteen dollars, assuming a grade of very fine. That was a weeks pay to many in the middle of the Great Depression. I wonder if a "George Washington Bicentennial Commission" exhibit would still be intact. The coin would probably be a part of it. What a provenance! Incidentally, Edward T. Folliard, a Pulitzer Prize winning newspaper historian a half century ago called this event his greatest thrill. As a small boy from Washington, D.C. he held Johnson's coat during the throw.

The 1796 date must have been chosen because the coin could have been handled theoretically by Washington himself, having died in 1799. The coin Washington threw as a child (if true of course) probably was of Spanish origin (Washington was born in 1732) but the story is almost certainly a fabrication.

This is one record of Walter Johnson's which will no doubt stand forever. Anyone care to throw their 1796 dollar 300 plus feet across a river? I didn't think so!

## Sources:

*Walter Johnson Baseball's Big Train*, Henry W. Thomas, The Associated Press, pages 330-331.  
*Silver Dollars and Trade Dollars of the U.S. A Complete Encyclopedia*, Q. David Bowers, page 231.





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